



Education Watch

Enhancing Flexibility & Accountability ■ Leaving No Child Behind

U.S. House Education & the Workforce Committee ■ John Boehner, Chairman
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H.R. 1 Gives a Boost to Character Education Programs

When the universal public education system as we know it today came into being, in the middle 19th century, nonsectarian moral instruction was essentially a given. Good character, it was widely thought, was inseparable from good citizenship.

Character education's roots can be found in Aristotle's *Ethics* and the writings of other philosophers, from John Locke to John Dewey. "Development of character is a solution to social problems and a worthy educational ideal," wrote John Stuart Mill. For much of the last century, however, the public education system shied away from character education.

But increasing student disaffection and school violence have re-ignited interest in instructing students in universally accepted values like integrity, honesty, concern for community, and discipline. And local schools around the nation have implemented character education programs, for which the Education Department provides \$9.3 million in state grants for the current fiscal year.

H.R. 1, the *No Child Left Behind* plan, increases that amount to \$25 million. Because as President George W. Bush says: "Parents have a tough battle in America today. Their children sometimes receive conflicting messages. What public education ought to do is stand on the side of parents."

Message of the Day

Today's culture transmits conflicting messages to our children. The public education system should stand on the side of parents.

- ❑ *Values like caring, justice and fairness, respect for others, responsibility, and trustworthiness are universally agreed upon.*
- ❑ *There is no substitute for teaching our children basic values and positive behavior.*
- ❑ *What children learn in the classroom inevitably shapes their character and impacts their moral development.*

DAILY EDUCATION FACTS

- Nearly 40 states have received U.S. Department of Education character education grants.
- H.R. 1 proposes nearly tripling federal funding for character education programs from the current \$9.3 million to \$25 million in FY 2002 (a \$15.7 million increase).
- Character education grants help states work with school districts to develop curriculum materials, provide teacher training, involve parents in character education, and integrate character education programs into curricula.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Good citizenship, compassion, and respect for others are qualities just as important as high standards in math, science, and reading, and school is where most young people spend most of their time outside the home." **Richard Riley, former secretary of education, May 23, 2000**